

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
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FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1906
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 HALIFAX 0560

E O 11652: N/A
TAGS: MPOL, CA
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF DEFENSE SPEECH BEFORE HALIFAX
BOARD OF TRADE

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER OF DEFENSE DANSON GAVE SPEECH NOV 8 BEFORE HALIFAX BOARD OF TRADE. IN SPEECH, DANSON ANNOUNCED HE WILL GO BEFORE CABINET NOV 9 TO BEGIN APPROVAL PROCESS FOR 20 YEAR, DOLLARS 10 BILLION PROGRAM TO BUILD REPLACEMENTS FOR CANADIAN NAVAL SHIPS, THAT FEDERAL GOVT WILL SOON GIVE ITS APPROVAL FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF CFB HALIFAX AND OTHER BASES, THAT NAVY WILL HAVE FIRST CALL ON ADDITIONAL FORCES PERSONNEL RECENTLY AUTHORIZED, AND THAT POLICY STATEMENT ON RESERVE FORCES WILL BE ISSUED EARLY NEXT YEAR. DANSON CHARACTERIZED WARSAW PACT MILITARY BUILDUP AS "UNPRECEDENTED" AND "FANTASTIC" BUT SAID NATO HAD CAPACITY TO MEET CHALLENGE. HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH U S PRESIDENT CARTER S INITIATIVE FOR DE-ESCALATION OF WORLD NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND THAT HE FELT PRESIDENT WAS BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY PARTICIPANTS IN SALT TALKS. DANSON NOTED SUCCESS OF MILITARY FRENCH LANGUAGE UNITS (FLU) AND SAID HIS DEPT WILL CONTINUE AND EXPAND PROGRAM. DANSON MADE STRONG PLEA FOR SUPPORT OF NATIONAL UNITY AND FOR INVOLVEMENT
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OF ALL CANADIANS IN EFFORT. END SUMMARY

2. FEDERAL MINISTER OF DEFENSE BARNETT J DANSON CONCLUDED HIS THREE-DAY VISIT TO MILITARY BASES IN NOVA SCOTIA WITH NOV 8 ADDRESS BEFORE ANNUAL FALL DINNER OF HALIFAX BOARD OF TRADE. SPEECH WAS TITLED "CANADA - ITS MILITARY FUTURE" BUT INCLUDED, IN ADDITION

TO REMARKS ON MILITARY, PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING AND TOLERANCE OF EACH OTHER BY CANADIANS OF BOTH MAJOR LANGUAGE GROUPS, AND FOR SUPPORT OF NATIONAL UNITY EFFORT.

3. SHIPBUILDING PROGRAM: DANSON ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL GO BEFORE CABINET NOV 9 TO BEGIN APPROVAL PROCESS FOR 20 YEAR, DOLLARS 10 BILLION PROGRAM TO BUILD REPLACEMENTS FOR CANADIAN NAVAL SHIPS. EIGHT-YEAR LEAD TIME IS REQUIRED BEFORE FIRST OF NEW SHIPS WILL ENTER SERVICE. PLAN IS INTENTIONALLY TO STRETCH BUILDING OF REPLACEMENTS OVER PERIODS OF YEARS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CONTINUING EMPLOYMENT IN SHIPYARDS THEREBY AVOIDING OLD "BOOM AND BUST" CYCLE AND TO PERMIT NAVY TO KEEP ABREAST OF "STATE OF THE ART" IN ITS NEW CONSTRUCTION. SHIPYARDS ON BOTH COASTS, ST LAWRENCE RIVER, AND GREAT LAKES WILL COMPETE FOR SHIP ORDERS. DANSON, IN ANSWER TO QUESTION, SAID HE DOES NOT INTEND TO INCREASE BUDGET FOR SUBMARINE FORCE BUT THAT THAT BRANCH WILL CONTINUE AT CURRENT STRENGTH LEVEL. HE SAID DEFENSE MONEY FOR NAVY IS BEST SPENT ON ANTI-SUBMARINE AND PATROL CAPABILITY VESSELS.

4. HALIFAX BASE: MINISTER ANNOUNCED FEDERAL GOVT WILL SOON APPROVE DOLLARS 100 MILLION REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CFB HALIFAX WITH PRIORITY GIVEN TO BUILDING NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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MAIN SHIP REPAIR UNIT IN DOCKYARD. CFB SHEARWATER AND CFB GREENWOOD WILL ALSO RECEIVE REDEVELOPMENT FUNDS. DANSON POINTED OUT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MILITARY IN AREA - 28,000 PERSONNEL WITH ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF DOLLARS 598.4 MILLION IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES AND OF THOSE TOTALS, 19,000 PERSONNEL WITH ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF 404.4 MILLION IN NOVA SCOTIA ALONE.

5. NAVAL PERSONNEL: DANSON NOTED LONG PERIODS OF SEA DUTY REQUIRED OF SAILORS DUE TO CURRENT MANPOWER SHORTAGES. HE SAID HIS DEPT POLICY IS TO REDUCE THIS HARDSHIP ON NAVY BY PROVIDING ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL AND THAT FIRST CALL ON RECENTLY AUTHORIZED INCREASE IN FORCES STRENGTH WILL GO TO NAVY.

6. MILITARY RESERVES. MINISTER SAID HIS DEPT IS STUDYING RESERVE FORCES AND INTENDS TO ISSUE POLICY STATEMENT EARLY NEXT YEAR. HE REALIZES VALUE OF RESERVES AND RE-EQUIPMENT PROGRAM FOR THEM IS COMMENCING.

7. WARSAW PACT: DANSON SAID MILITARY GROWTH OF WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN "FANTASTIC".

HE SAID "I DO NOT WANT TO CREATE HYSTERIA, BUT THEIR BUILDUP HAS BEEN ABSOLUTELY UNPRECEDENTED IN HUMAN HISTORY". HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAS TOURED THE USSR AND THAT "I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THOSE PEOPLE WANT....I DO NOT THINK THEY WANT WAR". HOWEVER, DANSON EMPHASIZED THAT NATO MUST HAVE A CREDIBLE DETERRENT AND CANADA MUST PLAY ITS PART OR RUN THE RISK OF WARSAW PACT MILITARY BUILDUP OVERWHELMING US. HE SAID STORY OF PACT BUILDUP MUST BE TOLD FACTUALLY AND PEOPLE SHOULD UNDERSTAND IT.

8. ON PRESIDENT CARTER: IN ANSWER TO QUESTION FROM AUDIENCE, DANSON SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED WITH U S PRESIDENT CARTER S INITIATIVE FOR DE-ESCALATION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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WORLD NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND SAID THAT HE FELT PRESIDENT WAS BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY BE PARTICIPANTS IN SALT TALKS. DANSON SAID THAT MILITARY BUILDUP WAS ONLY STOPGAP, REAL SOLUTION LIES IN ARMS REDUCTIONS IN BALANCED FASHION BY BOTH SIDES BUT UNTIL SUCH REDUCTIONS ARE AGREED UPON, WEST MUST BE ABLE TO SHOW IT HAS FULL DETERRENCE ABILITY.

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FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1907

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9. FRENCH LANGUAGE UNITS: DANSON NOTED SUCCESS OF FLU'S IN NAVAL AND ARMY FORCES AND SAID THAT HIS

DEPT INTENDS TO INTRODUCE FLU AIR SQUADRON AT CFB GREENWOOD. HE SAID FRENCH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PERSONNEL MUST BE ABLE TO SERVE IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY WITHIN A MILITARY AND CIVILIAN MILIEU IN WHICH BOTH GROUPS FEEL COMFORTABLE. DANSON RECOUNTED HIS OWN WWII SERVICE IN A MIXED ENGLISH AND FRENCH LANGUAGE UNIT AND WHAT HE HAD LEARNED FROM THAT EXPERIENCE.

10. NATIONAL UNITY: MINISTER MADE STRONG PLEA FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND SUPPORT OF CANADA BY ALL CANADIANS. HE CALLED FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION, AND TOLERANCE. HE NOTED THAT MANY COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD WOULD GLADLY EXCHANGE THEIR PROBLEMS FOR THOSE OF CANADA AND THAT CANADIANS SHOULD REALIZE HOW FORTUNATE THEY ARE AND BE WILLING TO WORK TO PRESERVE AND DEVELOP WHAT THEY HAVE. DANSON SAID MILITARY IS WORKING TO MAKE ITS PERSONNEL FROM ALL PARTS OF COUNTRY FEEL FULLY PART OF FORCE AND OF THEIR COUNTRY.

1. COMMENT: EDITORIAL IN NOV 7 HALIFAX NEWSPAPER TERMED DANSON "UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST DEFENSE MINISTER APPOINTED BY MR TRUDEAU DURING HIS PRIME MINISTERSHIP".
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DANSON HAS MADE EXCELLENT IMPRESSION DURING HIS VISIT TO NOVA SCOTIA, ESPECIALLY WITH HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF SHIP AND BASE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS WHICH WILL BE MAJOR BOOST FOR LOCAL ECONOMY. REPORTING OFFICER ATTENDED BOARD OF TRADE DINNER AS HEAD TABLE GUEST. DANSON SKILLFULLY TIED DEFENSE, ECONOMIC BENEFITS, AND NATIONAL UNITY THEMES TOGETHER IN HIS PRESENTATION WHICH WAS LACED WITH HUMOR AND REFERENCES TO HIS OWN MILITARY SERVICE. IN A NICE TOUCH, HE RECOGNIZED THE CAPTAIN AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE USS VIRGINIA WHO WERE GUESTS AT THE DINNER WHILE THEIR SHIP IS VISITING HALIFAX. PRESIDENT OF BOARD IN HIS CONCLUDING REMARKS, SAID DANSON HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT NATIONAL UNITY AND ECONOMIC ISSUES WERE CLOSELY INTERTWINED.

12. DRAFTER: RSAYLING
MOORE

NOTE BY OC/T: SECTION 1 OF 2 HALIFAX 0560 BEING SERVICED.

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